

Young people's estimates of how many New Zealanders smoke daily

Youth Insights Survey 2010

Background

The Health Sponsorship Council's (HSC's) Youth Insights Survey (YIS) monitors the broad spectrum of risk and protective factors that relate to the number of young people who take up smoking. Young people in New Zealand are exposed to tobacco and smoking in many ways, such as through other people smoking, tobacco displays at shops and in the media. Exposure to tobacco and smoking may influence young people's perception of smoking and how common it is to smoke. Recent data showed that around one in five (19%) New Zealand adults aged 15 to 64 years, and fewer than one in 10 (6%) 14- to 15-years-olds are daily smokers.^{1,2}

To understand whether young people see smoking as a normal activity, respondents from the 2010 YIS were asked to estimate the proportion of adults and people their age who smoke daily.

Methodology

All respondents were asked the following questions:

- Out of 100 *adults* in New Zealand, how many do you think smoke cigarettes at least once a day?
- Out of 100 *people your age*, how many do you think smoke cigarettes at least once a day?

Response options for both questions were 'none (0)', 'about a quarter (25)', 'about half (50)', 'about three-quarters (75)', and 'everyone (100)'.

Overall responses are presented. Statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) in the aggregated response 'at least one-half' (combined 'about half', 'about three-quarters' and 'everyone') are then reported by:

- Parent/caregiver smoking status (those who had indicated that one or both of their parents smoked, compared with those who had indicated that neither parent smokes).
- Smoking status (current smokers: those who smoked at least monthly, compared with those who had never tried smoking).
- Smoking susceptibility (non-susceptible never smokers, compared with susceptible never smokers, as defined by answers to a validated measure of susceptibility to smoking uptake. The base was those who had never tried smoking).
- School decile (low: decile 1-3; mid: decile 4-7; compared with high: decile 8-10).
- Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
- Gender.

A comparison of respondents' estimates of the proportion of adults and young people who smoke daily is also presented.

Findings

How common do young people think smoking is for adults?

Two in 10 (20%) young people thought 'about a quarter' of adults in New Zealand are daily smokers. Almost eight in 10 (79%) thought at least one-half of adults are daily smokers. The remaining respondents (1%) thought 'none' of New Zealand adults smoke daily (see Figure 1).

Respondents who were more likely to think that at least one-half of adults in New Zealand smoke daily were:

Young people's estimates of how many New Zealanders smoke daily

Youth Insights Survey 2010 (continued)

- Those who had indicated that one (86%) or both of their parents (92%) smoked, compared with those who had indicated that neither parent smoked (77%).
- Current smokers (91%), compared with never smokers (75%).
- Those attending low- (85%) or mid-decile (79%) schools, compared with those attending high-decile schools (73%).
- Māori (86%), compared with non-Māori (77%).
- Females (86%), compared with males (72%).
- There were no differences by smoking susceptibility.

How common do young people think smoking is for people their age?

Over half (55%) of young people thought 'about a quarter' of people their age are daily smokers. Four in ten (40%) thought at least one-half are daily smokers. The remaining respondents (5%) thought 'none' of people their age smoke daily (see Figure 1).

Respondents who were more likely to think that at least one-half of people their age smoke daily were:

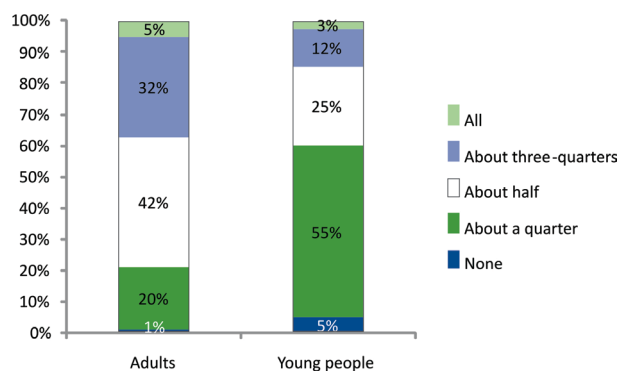
- Those who had indicated that one (47%) or both of their parents (62%) smoked, compared with those who had indicated that neither parent smoked (38%).
- Current smokers (66%), compared with never smokers (31%).

- Those attending low- (59%) or mid-decile (38%) schools, compared with those attending high-decile schools (25%).
- Māori (57%), compared with non-Māori (35%).
- Females (48%), compared with males (33%).
- There were no differences by smoking susceptibility.

Do young people think smoking is more common among adults than people their age?

A comparison of responses to both questions showed that, in general, young people thought smoking is more common among adults than people their age. Respondents were almost six times more likely to think that at least one-half of adults in New Zealand are daily smokers, compared to their estimates for young people's smoking rate.

Figure 1: Estimates of the proportion of adults and young people who smoke daily



Young people's estimates of how many New Zealanders smoke daily Youth Insights Survey 2010 (continued)

About the Survey

- The YIS survey forms part of the New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor (NZYTM), a collaborative effort by HSC and Action on Smoking and Health (ASH).
- The YIS is a nationwide paper-based survey conducted in schools every two years, first carried out in its current form in 2006.
- The YIS collects data on smoking-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, as well as data on students' interests, lifestyles, activities, and media use, and responses to tobacco control initiatives.
- The 2010 YIS was conducted with a sample of 3,197 Year 10 students (14- to 15-year-olds). The school-level response rate was 79%, the student level response rate 85%, and the overall response rate was 65%. The sample included 1,708 NZ European, 639 Māori, 332 Pacific, 337 Asian people and 158 people of 'Other' ethnicity (prioritised ethnicity).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the population of Year 10 school students.
- For this analysis, proportions and 95% confidence intervals were produced. Odds ratios were undertaken to compare responses between groups. The significance level used for statistical analyses was set to $\alpha=.05$.
- A full description of the 2010 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found at www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html.

References

- ¹ Ministry of Health (2010). *Tobacco Use in New Zealand: Key findings from the 2009 New Zealand Tobacco Use Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
- ² Paynter, J. (2010). *National Year 10 ASH snapshot survey, 1999-2009: trends in tobacco use by students aged 14-15 years*. Report for Ministry of Health, Health Sponsorship Council and Action on Smoking and Health: Auckland, New Zealand.

About the HSC

The HSC is a crown entity that uses health promotion initiatives to promote health and encourage healthy lifestyles, with a long-term focus on reducing the social, financial and health costs of a number of health behaviours.

Citation

Li, J. & Tu, D. (2011). *Young people's estimates of how many New Zealanders smoke daily – Youth Insights Survey 2010* [In Fact]. Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council. Retrieved from www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html

Research and Evaluation Unit, HSC
PO Box 2142, Wellington 6011, New Zealand,
www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html, research@hsc.org.nz
September 2011

